United Nations A/CN.10/PV.271

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

271st meeting

Tuesday, 11 April 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time we take the floor during this session, we would like to begin by assuring you, Mr. Chairman, of this delegation's support for your work and that of the Bureau. We would also like to congratulate the delegation of Brazil, which will be presiding over Working Group II, on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

We also want to associate ourselves with the statements that have been delivered by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Guyana, on behalf of the Rio Group.

I do not want to make a statement that revisits the themes of the general debate. Instead, we would like to contribute in the hope of launching an interactive process, to a free exchange of ideas. We are aware that we are experiencing a time of crisis in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and in the area of international security as a whole. That is the result of various circumstances and phenomena.

First of all, there exist unilateral perceptions and a lack of political will to adequately implement various international instruments — such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — in order to launch the cut-off treaty. There is also a certain lack of commitment on the part of several nuclear Powers to provide negative security assurances that are legally binding on nuclear States.

We have noted a certain degree of reluctance with regard to making further progress in the implementation of the 13 practical steps to bring about nuclear disarmament set out in the final report of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Worse yet, the 2005 Review Conference ended with no results at all. That atmosphere of stagnation and inaction, that lack of political will, was once again reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It was in fact impossible to include in that document any language whatever pertaining to nuclear disarmament and international security.

At the same time, we have a crisis with regard to the non-proliferation regime established by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That is obviously creating a global problem that is causing tension in relations between States and calls into question the effectiveness of established principles of collective security.

We are witnessing serious attempts to evade multilateral non-proliferation agreements, and we see with growing concern that there exists the temptation — or rather a succumbing to the temptation — to acquire nuclear technology with military potential. That temptation exists, it is affecting various States and, in one way or another, it and these technological developments — which in a certain sense

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

06-30576 (E)

can be considered legitimate — shatter the non-proliferation regime.

As a result of all that, the United Nations disarmament machinery is being called into question. Thus there are attempts to seek alternative courses of action. like-minded groups are attempting to compensate, albeit partially, for the lack of results in the Conference on Disarmament, in this Commission and in other multilateral disarmament forums. We have listened to a number of interesting ideas, such as that of establishing certain debate mechanisms within the First Commission or the General Assembly, which has apparently had encouraging results in Geneva.

However, Chile continues to endorse and have confidence in the possibilities and potential of the disarmament machinery. We continue to have faith in the International Atomic Energy Agency. We want to strengthen its verification regime, and that is why we urge all those States that have not yet done so to sign and implement additional protocols to their comprehensive safeguards agreements. We need to reaffirm the validity and legitimacy of the set of legal instruments that form the basis for international security, disarmament and the machinery responsible for their implementation.

After a number of years, we finally have a mutually agreed agenda, which provides us with a broad conceptual framework for action within a three-year period. Chile shares the view expressed by the Chairman in his document dated 31 March 2006, which sets out a vision of what we can reasonably hope to achieve at this session. We agree that there is a need to have realistic objectives that will enable us — at this session, we hope — to lay the groundwork for a substantive discussion.

If there is really genuine interest in making progress in this area, and political resolve to do so, we will have to demonstrate flexibility. We therefore believe that the debates in the two working groups — on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons — and the debates on reforming the Commission's working methods should be viewed and assessed according to the merits of each subject, of each exchange of ideas.

We must avoid conditionalities that will limit the progress that can be made in each of these scenarios, on each of these ideas. The requirement that "the efforts of the international community aimed at non-proliferation should be parallel to simultaneous efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament" (see A/CN.10/PV.269) may be correct in theory, but it also introduces a linkage that is not helpful to us.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, we wish to point out that recent international developments show that unilateral approaches have had to give way to multilateral approaches in order to effectively address the problems related to this area of our work. That demonstrates the need for a strong multilateral system genuinely committed to disarmament and non-proliferation. But that in turn requires political will and moral commitment to implement effective measures that will produce the results we seek.

Thus far, unfortunately, we have noted on more than one occasion a certain divergence between the official statements of some and the concrete actions that they undertake. We therefore believe it is important to introduce a measure of accountability with regard to both the Conference on Disarmament and this Commission.

We want and encourage genuine and active participation by civil society in our discussions. We believe that civil society not only should observe our debates, but also should serve as an agent and a point of communication with public opinion so that the public knows what we are doing, who is taking certain actions and, frankly, who perhaps bears responsibility for the lack of concrete results.

With regard to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, Chile unreservedly supports the Latin American positions on that subject, which are well known. We call for greater transparency in the international weapons market. Import and export control mechanisms must be improved. Sales licenses, destination or final use guarantees and other control measures have been shown to be insufficient.

We often observe that arms embargoes imposed under the United Nations Charter are violated. At the same time, we note that weapons transfers are not always reported and that parallel and illicit markets persist. The implementation of confidence-building and security-building measures helps to create a favourable atmosphere for the control and limitation of

conventional weapons, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament.

We believe that we must move towards the gradual establishment of mechanisms for consultation and cooperation among Member States in the area of security and defence, as well as the implementation of confidence-and security-building measures. In Chile's case, I am pleased to say, such mechanisms involving our neighbouring countries are in place and actively functioning. They represent a historic qualitative leap forward of the greatest importance, given the situation in our region — particularly in the Southern Cone — only 25 years ago.

We must develop and implement new confidence-building measures to overcome traditional threats to security, but also to equip ourselves with resources and tools to confront new threats to security. Here, I wish to emphasize once again the importance and significance of the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted at the Mexico City summit held in 2003.

At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/92. Its objectives include strengthening the exchange of information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. In that connection, we believe it is essential to exchange information about the experiences that have been gained at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels in order to design appropriate strategies that can be applied to other regions.

We believe that the Commission's methods of work should be discussed in our plenary meetings, and we must ensure also that we allocate the same amount of time to this issue as we do to other issues we will be discussing.

The Commission currently is the only multilateral forum for debate on these crucial issues affecting international security. It is an important body, but we do not believe that it is irreplaceable. Indeed, bodies are created on the basis of need, and, when they do not meet that need effectively, they fall into disuse and disappear. We are prepared to continue our efforts to ensure that the Commission is accorded the significance and importance that it truly deserves.

Mr. Prasad (India): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my delegation, I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and assure you of our full cooperation in your efforts to guide the Commission's work. We should like also to express our appreciation to Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, the outgoing Chairman, for his contribution to forging a consensus on the agenda of the Commission. We would also like to congratulate the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, and compliment him on his thoughtful statement to the Commission yesterday.

There is a deep connection between the deficient functioning of the United Nations disarmament machinery and the decline in the multilateral ethic in international relations. The reconvening of the substantive session of the Commission after a gap of two years to consider two important issues on the disarmament agenda is, in a sense, a reaffirmation of multilateralism. It is symptomatic of the fact that the multilateral approach, even if contested, continues to be regarded by the international community as critical to the development of norms and standards governing international relations.

The Disarmament Commission plays a unique role in the multilateral disarmament mechanism created by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I). As a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, with the same universal membership, it has the mandate to consider, and make recommendations on, issues relevant to disarmament to the General Assembly, and, through it, to the negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament. The Commission provides a platform for all States to engage in an interactive and thoroughgoing dialogue on these issues.

The task of the Commission thus is to prepare the ground for disarmament negotiations by elaborating a general approach to such negotiations. The Commission has previously been able to formulate principles, guidelines and recommendations on several disarmament issues, including those on verification and confidence-building measures. Since the Commission reaches its conclusions by consensus, its recommendations provide a useful and universally acceptable framework for all States in their endeavour to achieve their final objective: general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The Commission's first agenda item enjoins it to make recommendations for achieving the objectives of

nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. India remains fully committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, to be realized through the complete elimination of nuclear weapons through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly had accorded the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament. It affirmed that its ultimate objective was the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and outlined concrete steps to achieve that objective. The Millennium Declaration in 2000 reiterated the commitment of the States Members of the United Nations to strive for the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

For India, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they intersect and reinforce each other. The very first resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 1946, adopted unanimously, sought the elimination of atomic weapons from national armaments and, indeed, all other major weapons amenable to mass destruction. The present discussion concerns how to go about this task and also, in the process, deal with contemporary proliferation threats emanating both from States and non-State actors. Disarmament and non-proliferation, therefore, are not polar opposites but two ends of a single continuum.

Under the presidency of the Republic of Korea during the first part of its 2006 session, the Conference on Disarmament engaged in a focused debate on the issue of nuclear disarmament. It became evident that all States, both those that possess nuclear weapons and the non-nuclear-weapon States, remain firmly committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament. A number of issues were identified by the member States of the Conference during the debate with a view to achieving that goal. It is therefore opportune that the Commission is going to consider in some detail ways and means of achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, in order to arrive at a set of recommendations on the subject.

The Commission can carry forward discussions on nuclear disarmament and chart a possible path that provides direction for the future work of the Conference. The task of the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, is to produce legally binding agreements and conventions. Although it is currently engaged in structured discussions on the issues on its agenda, its functions cannot substitute for those of the Disarmament Commission, the deliberative organ of the United Nations disarmament mechanism, which must consider issues relevant to disarmament and make recommendations to the Conference. My delegation will present India's perspectives on the steps that need to be taken to achieve the twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the course of discussions in the Working Group devoted to this issue.

A basic problem afflicting the disarmament institutions and processes is the lack of trust among the States. That erosion of trust further begets a lack of willingness for mutual accommodation, making further progress on nuclear disarmament even more difficult. The absence of consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation paragraphs of the 2005 World Summit Outcome underscored the fact that currently there are sharp differences among States as to goals, priorities and approaches in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Those differences cannot be set aside or ignored. For any breakthrough to take place, all States need to sincerely engage in dialogue on their approaches to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and understand and accommodate each other's security concerns and threat perceptions.

One way to restore such trust would be to secure a reaffirmation of the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear- weapon States to the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The Commission provides all States an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and to outline their positions and priorities, as well as understand the positions and priorities of others.

We are hopeful that renewed consideration of the agenda item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons" will be productive this time. In revisiting this issue, addressed during the last three substantive sessions of the Commission, we should strive for the consensus that had eluded the Commission earlier. My delegation considers it useful to build on the deliberations held already in the Commission during its last cycle of work. India fully supports the adoption of confidence-building measures, whether bilateral, regional or global, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of a region.

India has initiated, both unilaterally and bilaterally, a number of confidence-building measures in its neighbourhood to built trust and confidence and to ensure greater transparency. We are committed to adopting further measures to prevent misunderstanding and promote a stable environment of peace and security with the countries in our neighbourhood. In considering this matter in Working Group II, we will outline our approach to the issue of confidence-building measures in fuller detail.

The United Nations has contributed to the development of an impressive corpus of norms and standards governing international relations, including in the field of arms control and disarmament. The Disarmament Commission has played a unique role in that and has many achievements to its credit. However, no system or institution is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. Our experience in the First Committee demonstrates that there is scope for better utilization of the resources available. My delegation therefore welcomes the fact that, in addition to considering the two agenda items, the Commission will also discuss measures for improving the effectiveness of the methods of its work.

We look forward to working with other delegations for a purposive and productive session.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of our full cooperation in your efforts to guide the Commission's work. We should like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, the outgoing Chairman, for his commendable work in forging a consensus on the agenda.

My delegation thanks you, Mr. Chairman, for having convened this meeting to consider, inter alia, proposals for the forthcoming 2007 session in preparation for the final documents on our two substantive agenda items, to be concluded in 2008. We commend you for putting together ideas and strategies for the negotiations that lie ahead.

We congratulate Mr. Nabuaki Tanaka on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The United Republic of Tanzania attaches great importance to the activities of this Commission in finding effective ways to address issues and problems relating to nuclear and conventional disarmament. In essence, those problems call for further reflection on the dynamics of the global security environment and on how the international community can better use technological advancements in the military realm to enhance human development and avoid the armed conflict that is inherent in the status quo.

In that context, we cannot but acknowledge the strong nexus that exists between security, development and human rights. Although in most regions cooperation on matters relating to defence and security is becoming a common phenomenon, the scenario at the global level remains worrisome. To be sure, some progress has been made in that area, but that progress has been slow, and it seems that the dominant world strategic thinking is locked into scenarios geared to the nuclear past. However, we have a shared interest in our common security. We should be able to adopt constructive defence policies that avoid confrontation and promote confidence, transparency and broader cooperation for a safer world for all of us, beginning with a commitment to engage in deeper cuts in existing conventional and strategic force structures, as well as to scale down overall defence spending.

It is important to emphasize that the danger of nuclear and conventional strategic weapons is ominous, and that the challenges to their disarmament are enormous. Notwithstanding the danger, progress in disarmament has been disappointing. First, we are concerned about the fact that, for seven consecutive years, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to agree even on a programme to start its substantive work. Secondly, the Disarmament Commission failed last July to reach consensus on the nuclear agenda for the 2006 substantive session. We therefore hope that this time we will be able to make significant headway on that important aspect.

We ought to take a more serious approach. My delegation believes that issues relating to disarmament efforts should continue to be at the forefront of the international peace and security agenda for several years to come. We are certainly concerned about the

lack of progress in world disarmament and its dire consequences for security and development. For example, with regard to nuclear weapons, many regions have declared themselves nuclear-weapon-free zones. Yet delays in complete nuclear disarmament may incrementally increase the possibility and danger of proliferation, in particular the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including to terrorist groups. That slackness may have adverse consequences for other areas of human security, especially in diverting resources from the global commitment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, set for 2015. The current rate and scale of armament is inimical to development and human security.

In that context, we cannot overemphasize the continued international efforts to strengthen and achieve universal adherence to and full compliance with effective implementation of the provisions of existing arms control and disarmament accords. Yet it is now clear that the direction of nuclear disarmament has taken a new turn since 2001. The situation is characterized by new initiatives among major Powers to compete for space-based defence systems, such as the National Missile Defence system.

Available statistics show that the global community spends $800 billion a year on military forces and keeps more than 20 million personnel under arms. But the total expenditure of the United Nations Population Fund's project to promote the right of every man, woman and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity in a total of 166 countries scarcely amounted to $225 million during 2004. Thus, it is estimated that, unless an additional $50 million a year is provided worldwide in the fight against poverty, the Millennium Goal to halve poverty and hunger by 2015 will be seriously affected. This is, indeed, an irrational and ineffective way to use our very scarce global resources.

Moreover, it is now a well recognized fact that there exists a direct link between poverty and political instability, which is exacerbated by the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Successful disarmament would remove the serious danger associated with the arms race in the areas of conventional and unconventional weapons, as well as the hazards of nuclear-waste dumping. Disarmament would also release the enormous amount of resources spent on weapons for use in other, more productive activities, relating to development and human security. That conversion is not automatic. It must be backed by conscious political will to establish and support the nexus between national and international security.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we reiterate our support and cooperation during the three-week deliberations under your able guidance.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): I would like first, on behalf of the Republic of San Marino, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Tanaka, on his appointment.

We concur with the Under-Secretary-General's statement that

> "We are meeting a particularly difficult and challenging moment for disarmament and non-proliferation and at a time of heightened international concern about weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons". (*A/CN.10/PV.269*)

The vast majority of Member States, like ours, which do not have such weapons, are powerless bystanders and witnesses in the face of a frightening display of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons. We are playing with our own and our children's lives, waiting for the first catastrophic event to happen. Nation fragmentation, international and national unrest, acts of terrorism and irresponsible government contribute to the chilling uncertainty of our collective future. Hopefully, we shall join in a reinvigorated effort which will enable us to provide guidelines for complete nuclear disarmament.

No less important is the issue concerning the reduction and regulation of conventional arms, with special focus on the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Balancing the need for self-protection with the need for transparency must be our principal task in addressing this problem.

Pertaining to the first substantive agenda item, we affirm our concern about the slow process towards nuclear disarmament. We hope for a stronger non-proliferation policy. In this respect, we strongly support the Millennium Declaration's aim of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction using all available options to that end.

Mr. Choi Hong-ghi (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to join others, Sir, in congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and also in congratulating the other members of the Bureau on their election. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation during the course of these deliberations.

This substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is especially important because it follows a series of setbacks over the past several years to the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. As we all know, the long-standing stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and the failure to complete a substantive session of the Disarmament Commission since its unsuccessful negotiations at the 2003 session have brought about a crisis of confidence in the multilateral disarmament machinery. The situation was not improved by the failure to produce an outcome document at last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), or by the failure to address disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1). Against this backdrop, the agreement in December 2005 on the substantive agenda of this Disarmament Commission session, which has finally brought us back to the table, was an important step forward and a welcome sign of progress.

I would now like to highlight several issues related to the substantive agenda that my delegation deems particularly important.

Despite all the setbacks and challenges to the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery, or perhaps because of them, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We have every reason to preserve and enhance the integrity of the NPT.

But the non-proliferation regime based on the NPT is faced with unprecedented challenges. There is increasing recognition that the monitoring and verification mechanisms of the Treaty need to be strengthened and improved. To this end, my delegation believes that the model additional protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement should be established as a new global safeguards and verification standard. Universal adoption of such protocols should be promoted. A bolstered verification system, universally applied, would increase global confidence in the compliance of States parties with their non-proliferation obligations under the Treaty.

Still, no verification system can be wholly foolproof against determined proliferators. To further protect the international community from the danger of nuclear proliferation, we support the ongoing efforts to strengthen existing export control regimes and to create new supplementary measures to secure nuclear materials and technology.

Non-proliferation has its counterpart in disarmament. The disarmament obligations on nuclear-weapon States laid out in article VI of the NPT are fundamental to the full implementation of the Treaty. We welcome the progress that nuclear-weapon States have made over the past decades in reducing their nuclear arsenals, and we look forward to further reductions under the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. Nevertheless, progress in nuclear disarmament has not matched expectations set by the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. As we call on non-nuclear weapons States to strengthen their commitments to non-proliferation, the nuclear weapons States must do their part by making progress in disarmament. My delegation encourages the nuclear-weapon States to be more proactive and transparent in working towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, to ease the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States, the nuclear-weapon States should provide negative security assurances to those States parties to the NPT that are in full compliance with their Treaty and other safeguards obligations.

The Republic of Korea also strongly supports the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Those steps would significantly strengthen the NPT system and lead us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we welcome the recent ratification of the CTBT by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. We urge those States that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so without delay, particularly those States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty's entry into force. Pending entry into force, a moratorium should be maintained on nuclear test explosions.

As for the fissile material cut-off treaty, we welcome the plans of the Conference on Disarmament to hold a structured, focused discussion on this issue at its second session this year, in May. We hope that substantive progress will be made during that discussion, serving as a catalyst to start Conference negotiations on a cut-off treaty immediately and without conditions.

Let me turn now to conventional arms. Though we were unable to agree on a final document at the previous substantive session, my delegation notes the substantial progress that has been made on the issue of conventional arms. In this regard, my delegation fully supports the Chairman's proposal that Working Group II take up, as the basis for discussion, the fourth revision of the consolidated working paper of the previous Chairman of Working Group II, thereby facilitating the current discussion.

Confidence-building measures should begin in those areas that can be most easily achieved, moving from there to more difficult areas. Furthermore, we must be cautious not to allow a lack of progress on the most controversial issues to be an excuse for inaction in other areas. My delegation is hopeful that we can make substantial progress during this session towards an agreement on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, which could have a positive effect on our discussions of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

My Government's efforts to promote inter-Korean reconciliation can be understood in this context. We believe that mutual confidence and trust have been substantially enhanced through projects such as the reconnection of railroads and highways across the demilitarized zone (DMZ), the removal of landmines in the vicinity of the DMZ, the development of the Gaesong industrial complex, the installation of a hotline between military authorities in Seoul and in Pyongyang, and the exploration of opportunities for cooperation in fisheries in the Yellow Sea. We believe that by increasing mutual confidence, these measures will have a positive impact on efforts to resolve many pending security issues.

In contrast to the setbacks we have faced on nuclear issues, recent achievements in the area of small arms and light weapons have been quite encouraging. Though there is still much to be done, the adoption in 2001 of the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, followed by the adoption of the draft International Instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and the entry into force last year of the firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime were substantive steps in the right direction. We hope that further measures to strengthen the Programme of Action, including confidence-building measures, will be discussed and adopted at the upcoming review conference for the Programme of Action.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which is also incorporated in the Programme of Action, is a good example of the practical application of a confidence-building measure on a global scale. Since its inception in 1992, the Register has contributed to enhancing the level of transparency in military affairs. My delegation welcomes the steady increase in the number of Member States that are participating in the Register by submitting national reports. We call on those States that have not yet done so to consider participating.

We believe that positive consideration should be given to the Secretary-General's suggestion contained in his report to the Security Council in March to expand the Register to include international transfers of small arms and light weapons. Likewise, we would like to see wider participation with the United Nations System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures.

In today's world, ongoing reform has become a part of life. Throughout the United Nations it has become clear that achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. The Disarmament Commission should be no exception. My delegation believes that it is timely and appropriate for us to discuss measures to improve the Commission's working methods. We pledge to participate in such discussions with an open mind.

The challenges before us are substantial, but some progress is better than none. As we strive to overcome the current stalemate, Mr. Chairman, my delegation looks to your wise guidance, but in the end, it will be up to every Member State to find the will and strength to break the impasse in the Disarmament Commission and move forward towards a safer and more peaceful world.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Commission. Through you, I would also like to congratulate the Bureau and the Chairpersons of the Working Groups on their elections. I am confident that, under your able and skilled stewardship, the deliberations of the Commission will come to fruition and produce effective results.

May I also take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Tanaka, the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to wish him all the best in his new and challenging assignment.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We are meeting here at a time when the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery is in limbo. Not only have we not made any progress during the past several years, we have in fact regressed on many fronts. That is evidenced in some recent developments outside the existing disarmament and non-proliferation machinery, which have further weakened the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The Conference on Disarmament — the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiation — has been remarkably unproductive for over a decade. The debacle of the 2005 NPT Review Conference was shocking, to say the least. And our failure to make any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document was surely acute underperformance. Those successive failures have certainly left deep dents in our confidence in the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation endeavours.

It is from that perspective that we attach great importance to this substantive session of the Commission. Our agreement on the Commission's agenda may be a small step, but it is surely a firm step in the right direction.

The NPT and the CTBT are the two key instruments for achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Bangladesh believes that any erosion of the NPT regime is a danger to world peace. We also reject double standards and call for the universalization of the NPT and the CTBT. If possession of nuclear weapons appears to strengthen the sense of security, their acquisition will become attractive. If some have them, and appear to benefit from their possession, others will want them also. That is a simple, but incontrovertible, logic.

I am happy to be able to say that Bangladesh has an impeccable disarmament and non-proliferation record. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first South Asian nation in Annex 2 of the CTBT to have ratified that Treaty. We are also a party to the NPT and to other disarmament treaties. We have concluded safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including on additional protocols.

We believe that the greatest threat to humanity continues to stem from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. We have witnessed the devastation caused by the atomic bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But those bombs contained energy equivalent to some 12,500 tons of TNT. According to experts, the power of a nuclear bomb currently ranges from the equivalent of 1 to 20 megatons of TNT, and several thousands of them are deployed around the world.

Furthermore, we are continuing efforts to enhance precision. We must bear in mind that increasing precision — or the supposed reduction in collateral damage — also enhances the propensity for use, thereby lowering the nuclear threshold. That is a genie that once unleashed can never be contained. No war resulting from its use can be fightable or winnable.

We are also convinced that nuclear weapons have served no purpose for humankind. With the demise of the cold war, almost two decades ago, erstwhile foes have become partners, and even allies. The theory of nuclear deterrence that we used to call MAD — mutually assured destruction — was developed and put in practice in a different historical era. Such a theory should no longer be relevant in this era. Furthermore, we believe that nuclear weapons are inherently dangerous, hugely expensive and militarily inefficient.

We also reject doctrines that view nuclear weapons as legitimate means of war-fighting. The International Court of Justice has rightly concluded, in its advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, that

> "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law." (see *A/51/218, annex, para. 105 (2) E*)

The belief that nuclear arms can ensure the security of a country is not only baneful but also fallacious. We also acknowledge that in the event of a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. We must therefore strive for systematic and concerted nuclear disarmament, with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We are deeply disappointed at the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. However, we do not believe that that has in any way weakened our achievements at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. We also believe that the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed by consensus in 2000 continues to be the cornerstone of our disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

We are concerned at the slow pace of progress on the part of the nuclear-weapon States towards eliminating their nuclear arsenals, as well about the improvement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons, which run contrary to the assurances provided at the time of the conclusion of the CTBT. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States to take immediate steps towards irreversible and accelerated reduction and the eventual elimination of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the NPT.

We urge the Conference on Disarmament to return to its substantive work immediately and to begin negotiations on a programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timeframe. In that regard, we refer to the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice, in the same advisory opinion, that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*ibid, para. 105 (2) F*)

The Conference on Disarmament must also resume its negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty without any further delay.

Bangladesh reiterates that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is in contravention of negative security assurances. We continue to believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against such use or threat of use. Pending their total elimination, we reiterate our call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

Bangladesh deeply values the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We appreciate the efforts in the context of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, and we call for the establishment of more such zones in all regions of the world.

Article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable right of all States parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the Treaty. The NPT thus obliges States parties to cooperate among themselves in the matter of exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge and information on the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

It is disconcerting to note that undue restrictions on exports to developing non-nuclear-weapon countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes continue to persist through measures incompatible with the provisions of the Treaty. Those barriers must be removed.

We also underscore that the IAEA must, under its statutory obligations, continue to pursue the goals of technical cooperation in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. The IAEA must put in place necessary safeguards and verification regimes and monitor their compliance in conformity with the obligations of the States parties to the NPT.

Bangladesh remains convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the greatest guarantee against their proliferation. Bangladesh is concerned at alleged attempts by terrorists to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. That is a grave phenomenon that we need to address collectively and with prudence. But we believe that the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is through the total elimination of such weapons.

Bangladesh underlines the importance of reducing alarmingly increasing military expenditures in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armament. Increased openness and transparency in the legitimate transfer of conventional arms, coupled with enhanced reliance on the peaceful settlement of disputes, could build the necessary environment of confidence. Such steps would reduce the risks of armed conflicts and the arms race, freeing up vital resources for the socio-economic development of the poor and vulnerable sectors of our populations.

The challenge before us today is to totally eliminate nuclear weapons before they eliminate us. That would be a litmus test for humanity; it would also determine our capacity to be led, by sound logic and respect for international law, to security for all — or, through fear and a quest for power, to oblivion.

Moreover, we must remember that the current deadlock in the disarmament machinery is the result of deliberate policy decisions. It is generally asserted, with a modicum of truth, that success in nuclear disarmament does not hinge on technical issues but is a matter of political will. We therefore need stronger political will and more innovative thinking to move forward on this score. If we fail to act now, it would be at great peril to ourselves and to posterity.

Mr. Chaudhry (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its substantive session this year. My delegation also extends felicitations to the other members of the Commission's Bureau on their election and to the Chairs of the two working groups. We assure them of our support and cooperation. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Tanaka. We wish him success as he assumes his new responsibilities.

The Disarmament Commission session has two substantive items on its agenda: "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". In addition to those two agenda items, the Commission will discuss measures for improving the effectiveness of the working methods of the Commission. We hope that the Commission will be able to overcome the differences surrounding the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda and to agree on actions required at the international and regional levels with a view to reviving the prospects for effective nuclear and conventional disarmament and its meaningful contribution to international and regional peace and security.

With regard to the first substantive agenda item, the Commission should be able to recommend ways and means of addressing the motives that drive States to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Those motives include perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

The new threat of terrorists acquiring WMDs must also be addressed. The threat of proliferation can be contained only if it is accompanied by a parallel effort to achieve WMD disarmament. Discrimination and the asymmetrical possession of weapons of mass destruction are not a recipe for non-proliferation or for regional or global stability. To deal effectively with this threat, collective and cooperative measures, not coercion and discrimination, are required. At the same time, new threats should not obscure the dangers posed by the existence and continuous improvement — that is, the vertical proliferation — of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and must be promoted and pursued simultaneously.

Initiatives that bypass the existing multilateral framework offer only temporary solutions in the area of counter-proliferation, non-proliferation and non-compliance. An unequal and restricted Security Council cannot supplant or circumvent multilateral negotiating processes. Unilateral restrictions and selective regimes will not promote security; they will exacerbate insecurity.

The elaboration of treaty regimes is no doubt an arduous exercise, but once treaties have been freely agreed, they have a better chance of commanding adherence and compliance. It is therefore important that the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004) should now be transferred to a more representative and legitimate body within the General Assembly.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, credible steps by nuclear-weapon States within a reasonable time frame are essential to revalidate the bargain on disarmament and non-proliferation and to restore a genuine balance between those two objectives. Cooperation in the peaceful use of energy must also continue to enjoy international support under globally agreed conditions. There is a need to reconcile the nuclear reality — that is, the existence of eight, not five, nuclear-weapon States — with the global non-proliferation regime. That needs to be achieved on a systemic and non-discriminatory basis that strengthens rather than weakens the objectives of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Discriminatory approaches and double standards will not serve those objectives.

Although Pakistan is a nuclear-weapon State, it subscribes to the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We are fulfilling the NPT's non-proliferation norms and objectives. Pakistan is prepared, on a voluntary and non-discriminatory basis, to continue to act in consonance with the obligations undertaken by nuclear-weapon States under articles I, II and III of the NPT. Efforts to secure the universality of the NPT are commendable, but they must take account of realties that are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

Pakistan supports negotiations on a fissile material treaty in accordance with the Shannon mandate and the "five ambassadors" proposal for a universal, non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty. The report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) clearly identifies the key issues, which include the scope of the Treaty, the past and future production of fissile material and the management of such material. The agreed basis for negotiating the Treaty cannot be described as preconditions.

Unless nuclear disarmament is achieved, non-nuclear-weapon States will continue to be entitled to assurances that nuclear weapons will not be used against them. The security assurances offered by most nuclear-weapon States are restrictive, partial and qualified, and they do not enhance the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. Threats to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States in certain circumstances must be disavowed.

We share the view that existing international legal instruments are inadequate to prevent the weaponization of outer space. There is a need to consolidate and reinforce the regime and enhance its effectiveness even as we comply strictly with existing agreements. China and Russia, in that regard, have done important work. We therefore support the five ambassadors' proposal to commence work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in a Conference on Disarmament ad hoc committee.

We also share the global concern regarding unbridled ballistic missile proliferation. To avert it, we call for enhanced efforts to conclude a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and universally negotiated treaty, within the United Nations system, on missiles, covering all aspects.

While international attention is focused on the need to control weapons of mass destruction, the trade in, and military expenditures on, conventional weapons continue to increase. After an initial decline in outlays on conventional weapons in the immediate aftermath of the cold war, in recent years there has been a surge in expenditures and a build-up of conventional armaments and armed forces.

The Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly characterized global military expenditures in 1978 as a colossal waste of resources and called for not only a reduction in such spending but also for the reinvestment of such resources into efforts to fight poverty and improve the human condition.

By that yardstick, cumulatively, global trends in military expenditures worldwide are both staggering and alarming. In 2004, total military spending rose to $1.035 trillion, at 2005 prices. This is in sharp contrast to the total budget of the United Nations, mandated to maintain international peace and security — less than 1.5 per cent of the world's military expenditures. The total value of arms transfer agreements in 2004 has been estimated at $37 billion, a significant increase over 2003. In 2004, the value of all arms transfer agreements with developing nations was nearly $21.8 billion — an increase over the $15.1 billion total in 2003.

The total value of international arms transfer agreements during the period 2001 to 2004 was $131.2 billion. During that period, developing countries accounted for 63.2 per cent of all international arms deliveries. Globalized arms production and sales continue to ignore the grave

humanitarian, political and strategic consequences of conventional weapons proliferation.

In view of these disturbing trends, it is imperative to pursue conventional arms control, at the lowest possible levels of armaments and military forces, in order to promote regional and international peace and security. We believe that the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest levels of armaments should be the prime objective of conventional arms control.

Conventional arms control needs to be pursued primarily in the regional and subregional contexts, since most threats to peace and security arise mainly in States located in the same region or subregion. In that regard, we can adopt and follow good practices. The value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a cornerstone of European security, cannot be underestimated. States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security.

The General Assembly has adopted a resolution entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels" which requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider formulating the principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control. The Assembly has also adopted a resolution entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context". That resolution emphasizes that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help strengthen international peace and security and be consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments. It also encourages the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. We hope that the Commission will draw on those resolutions in preparing recommendations on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

We in South Asia are pursuing a strategic restraint regime which has three constituents: nuclear and missile restraint; conventional balance; and conflict resolution. Even as we pursue the composite dialogue and confidence-building measures to resolve outstanding issues and promote strategic stability and nuclear-risk reduction, we will continue to strive for a conventional balance at the lowest possible level of armaments, since an imbalance could threaten stability, both conventional and non-conventional. In the interest of peace and security in South Asia, there must be restraint both in the demand and the supply of conventional weapons.

This session is taking place against the backdrop of several challenges to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime as well as to the multilateral deliberative and negotiating platforms. The failure to achieve agreement on disarmament and non-proliferation at the September summit last year highlighted those divergences. A decade-long impasse in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the two-year deadlock within the Commission underscore the fact that there are clear differences in perception, approach and modalities among member States in dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Those differences are dangerous for peace and stability, particularly in regions riven by conflicts and tensions. It is therefore essential to promote, through consultations and agreement among all United Nations Member States, a new security consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation. It must be premised on one of the fundamental principles of the Charter — that security is the right of every State.

The following elements could constitute the basis for such a consensus: first, affirmation of the centrality of the Charter for the peaceful resolution of underlying disputes and acceptance of the principle of equal security for all States; second, adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter to advance disarmament and non-proliferation and to promote and preserve international and regional peace and security; third, initial steps towards disarmament, including those agreed at the international level, and the de-alerting of nuclear weapons; fourth, compliance by all States parties with their respective obligations with respect to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) disarmament and non-proliferation; fifth, normalization of the relationship of the three States that are not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with the NPT regime, as suggested by Mr. ElBaradei and others.

Sixth, a commitment by all States to implement agreed measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMDs and their means of delivery; seventh, reaffirmation of the fact that preventing the

proliferation of WMDs shall not hamper international cooperation for peaceful purposes, while the goal of peaceful uses should not be used as a cover for proliferation; eighth, progress towards conventional weapons control and non-proliferation, especially in regions of conflict, with a view to promoting the maintenance of security at the lowest possible level of armaments; ninth, the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons; and, tenth, revitalization of the United Nations disarmament machinery, especially the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee of the General Assembly, to address international security, disarmament and proliferation challenges.

A new consensus would help address such threats as WMD proliferation to terrorists, the reported new doctrines on the use of nuclear weapons in waging war and the accompanying design and development of usable nuclear weapons, the development and accumulation of advanced conventional weapons, the development and deployment of an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system globally and regionally, the absence of an international agreement on missiles, and the militarization of outer space.

With regard to consideration of the issue of improving the Commission's working methods, we share the view of the Non-Aligned Movement that this issue has to be seen and discussed within the context of the overarching process of the revitalization of the General Assembly. A balanced and comprehensive approach is essential. At the same time, it should be noted that the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament — and, for that matter, in the overall multilateral disarmament machinery — is political, not procedural. Therefore, it cannot be broken by semantics or clever proposals for a programme of work. What is required is the political will to engage in substantive negotiations on all issues, not a quick fix addressing only some of them.

Pending the resolution of disagreements on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work and agenda, the Commission could consider, within its three-year cycle of work programme, the possibility of convening a special session to evolve and develop a new consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) *(spoke in French)*: I should like at the outset to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of our full cooperation for the success of our work. I should like also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Sylvester Rowe, for his efforts in preparing for this session. I wish further to welcome the appointment of the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, and to wish him every success in his work.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The delegation of Algeria welcomes the consensus reached at the end of last year that enabled the Disarmament Commission to resume its role and to renew the substantive debate in the important area of disarmament. However, it is clear that we are approaching our work in a disquieting international context that is fraught with significant implications for international peace and security — a context in which the multilateral enterprise of disarmament shows worrisome signs of running out of steam owing to the emergence of a new generation of weapons of mass destruction and of threats linked to nuclear proliferation.

This Disarmament Commission session is taking place in the wake of a series of developments that have had a negative effect on the nuclear disarmament process, marked, in particular, by the failure of the work of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the ongoing deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the paralysis of this very Commission in recent years.

However, those difficulties do nothing to weaken our firm belief that general and complete disarmament remains the only sound option for future generations, provided that the political will of States and a united front exist to relaunch a holistic debate on this issue.

From that standpoint, the Disarmament Commission, which has proved itself effective in the past, remains the most appropriate multilateral forum for cooperation and dialogue with the capacity to propose recommendations to consolidate past achievements and to participate in the efforts of the

international community with a view to relaunching the disarmament process and laying the foundation for a new era of peace and security.

It is in that constructive spirit aimed at establishing authentic collective security that my delegation intends to contribute to the success of the work of the Commission and work for consensus on the items on its agenda.

The item entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", which we will be discussing in Working Group I, will, we believe, help to reinforce disarmament and international security, for which we are all working. From our perspective, the goal of general and complete disarmament must regain its full meaning and relevance. Its achievement must be part of a process rooted firmly in scrupulous respect for the principles contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and in the priorities it set out, foremost among which is nuclear disarmament.

The achievement of nuclear disarmament must be predicated on a definitive break with the order based on the doctrine of military deterrence and supremacy. It must be actively undertaken through the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, with a view to setting out a programme of work that allows it to begin negotiations on drawing up binding legal instruments relating to nuclear disarmament, guarantees of the non-use of nuclear weapons and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Along the same lines, the implementation of the unequivocal, historic commitment undertaken by the nuclear States at the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals, along with the universality of the NPT, are very relevant means of achieving nuclear disarmament.

It is useful in this respect to recall that the 13 practical steps for the implementation of article VI of the NPT, adopted at the sixth Review Conference, over which my country had the honour of presiding, constitute a genuine programme of action pointing the way to disarmament and to meeting the ardent desire of all of humankind to see the world forever rid of weapons of mass destruction and the consequent threat of annihilation.

Furthermore, scrupulous respect for and implementation of the commitments undertaken to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be accompanied by joint international efforts to promote technological cooperation and scientific exchanges with a view to guaranteeing for all States the possibility of using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is important here to establish a balance between, on the one hand, the desire to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms and, on the other, the need for the transfer of nuclear technology for socio-economic development.

With regard to consideration of the second item, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", we hope that by the end of this cycle of the Disarmament Commission the outcome of our work will take account of the concerns of all delegations.

In this respect, we should emphasize that any steps aimed at confidence-building should be global in character and consist of strengthening peace and security, enhancing arms limitations and contributing to both conventional and nuclear disarmament. A selective approach pinpointing conventional weapons as being the only area on which confidence-building measures should focus would be a partial approach, and is not in our common interest.

Confidence-building measures, whose purpose is to create conditions for peaceful coexistence and to improve international relations founded on cooperation and solidarity, would be greatly strengthened by the reaffirmation of the universal principles enshrined in the Charter, namely, the right to legitimate self-defence, no recourse to the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the sovereign equality of States and the right of peoples to self-determination.

Equally important, economic measures that have a direct effect on security and the establishment of an equitable international economic environment that does not create marginalization are also elements that contribute to strengthening confidence-building measures.

At a time when the Conference on Disarmament, which has just concluded the work of the first part of its session, is faced with deadlock — a situation about which we are greatly concerned — I would like to express the hope that our Commission will continue to serve as a forum for productive and fruitful dialogue. Today, more than ever, the virtues of negotiation and cooperation must be pursued with a view to achieving disarmament and thus promoting an era of collective peace and security.

Finally, I would like to express once again my best wishes for the success of the work of the Commission.

Mr. Aboul Atta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on having been elected to lead the Disarmament Commission during its 2006 substantive session, and to express our wish for a successful session through coordination among the Bureau, member States and the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, to whom we wish success.

The success of our deliberations on nuclear disarmament and on confidence-building measures during the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is all the more important in view of the declining priority given in 2005 to nuclear disarmament commitments, on the pretext of changing international security priorities. This led to the failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the failure of the 2005 Millennium review summit to reach agreement in its outcome document on measures for nuclear disarmament and strengthening of the non-proliferation regime with a view to achieving the goal of preventing the further development of nuclear weapons and ultimately their total elimination.

Accordingly, it is incumbent upon this session of the Disarmament Commission to work to overcome the recent failures of international nuclear disarmament efforts, through full compliance by nuclear-weapon States with the unequivocal undertaking, agreed to by consensus at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, which remains the highest priority of international disarmament efforts, in accordance with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2).

Regional nuclear disarmament efforts represent a major contribution complementing international nuclear disarmament efforts to obtain the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions is among the most important of those regional efforts and contributes to the achievement of our nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

In this regard, and in spite of the success achieved through the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, Egypt and the other Arab States have for the past 25 years continued to strive, without progress, to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to prevent nuclear proliferation in the region. While the Arab States have committed themselves to these goals through adherence to the NPT, Israel's non-adherence to the treaty to date constitutes a genuine threat to regional security and a challenge to the non-proliferation regime, a state of affairs which continues to undermine the credibility of the NPT.

In order to address this threat to the regime, States parties, particularly nuclear-weapon States, must give concrete form to their commitment as expressed in the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. That resolution forms an integral part of the indefinite extension of the Treaty. It calls upon Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards and calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. These steps represent a prerequisite for the continued viability and validity of the non-proliferation regime in the region, which can be achieved only through the universality of the NPT and full compliance by all States parties with all of its provisions, on a non-selective basis.

Thus, the delegation of Egypt reaffirms its intention to pursue these efforts during the current session of the Disarmament Commission, in the light of the Commission's 1999 recommendations regarding nuclear-weapon-free zones and following our efforts in the General Assembly. We shall continue to advocate a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The non-proliferation regime today faces serious challenges, prime among them non-compliance with nuclear disarmament commitments under article VI of the NPT and the 13 practical steps agreed upon by consensus in 2000. Other challenges emanate from the emergence of strategic doctrines that promote the continued possession and development of nuclear weapons and the threat of their use against non-nuclear-weapon States, based on security considerations.

Thus, the delegation of Egypt strongly supports the call by the Non-Aligned Movement as expressed by the representative of Indonesia, for convening an international conference at the earliest possible date, with the objective of reaching agreement on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame, for prohibiting their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use, and for effecting their destruction. Convening such an international conference would give concrete form to the resolve of our Heads of State and Government expressed in the Millennium Declaration. It should aim at achieving the universality of the NPT and compliance by all States parties with their commitments, in accordance with the three pillars, as well as with the decisions and the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the final document of the 2000 Review Conference. The conference should also strive to fulfil the unequivocal undertaking in article VI of the NPT to eliminate nuclear arsenals as a stepping stone to nuclear disarmament. The conference should obtain commitments from States to eliminate security and defence doctrines based on the possession of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence, the development of military alliances and the sharing of nuclear technology. It should obtain commitments by nuclear-weapon States to withdraw and renounce deployment of their nuclear weapons outside their national territories and on non-first-use of nuclear weapons, including a legally binding international instrument jointly undertaking non-first-use and prohibiting the development and improvement of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Finally, the conference should strive to achieve a legally binding multilateral instrument on negative security assurances within the framework of the NPT, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the second substantive agenda item, on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, such measures cannot be a substitute for disarmament measures. Rather, they are complementary measures conducive to strengthening disarmament efforts. Such measures must be impartial, objective, transparent and comprehensive so that they can be agreed upon voluntarily by the States concerned, accomplishing thereby their intended confidence-building purposes.

The comprehensive application of confidence-building measures on the basis of equality can contribute to more effective security arrangements based on cooperation, transparency and the rejection of the use or threat of use of force.

Experience throughout the years has proved that confidence-building measures alone are insufficient without a strategic and political commitment to the principle of equal security for all and to peaceful co-existence based on cooperation instead of on military and other forms of advantages.

Bearing in mind the principle of equal security for all — and taking into account legitimate security concerns of all States concerned — it has to be noted that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms cannot serve its purpose as a confidence-building measure regionally and internationally so long as its scope is not expanded to include military holdings, procurement through national production and weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, as per General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, on the establishment of the Register. Nor will it serve as a confidence-building measure so long as it does not take into account considerations of regional military balances, which differ from one region to another.

In conclusion, the delegation of Egypt would like to express its support for your efforts, Mr. Chairman, to arrive at effective recommendations regarding nuclear disarmament and at confidence-building measures in a balanced manner that can lead to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the lofty post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their elections and to wish them every success in their work. You can rely,

Mr. Chairman, on the support and cooperation of the Russian delegation.

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, who for the first time is participating in the work of the Disarmament Commission as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Our delegation is pleased by the fact that this year the Commission will conduct its substantial session in two working groups and that it will also discuss measures to improve the Commission's methods of work.

Russia has consistently upheld the central role of the United Nations in collective efforts to maintain international peace and security, devise a global strategy against new challenges and threats and prevent a nexus between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, we support strengthening the Organization's multilateral disarmament machinery, including the Disarmament Commission.

We are faced with the paramount objectives of increasing the efficiency of the Organization and promoting the principle of multilateralism to ensure international security in strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations. As the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, stressed in his address to the General Assembly on 15 September 2005,

> "there is a need to adjust the Organization to new historic realities. But this process should be constructive. It should take into account both the lessons learned and the positive experience gained by the United Nations. And this process must unite, not separate." (*A/60/PV.5, p. 4*)

Those words are fully relevant to the work of the Disarmament Commission. We hope that the three-year cycle for the discussion of agenda items that begins this year will lead us to agreed recommendations.

Various views have been voiced recently about the critical state of the multilateral non-proliferation regime, arms control and disarmament. We agree that many of our expectations in this field remain unfulfilled. We regret in particular the failure to agree on a disarmament section in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. We all expected much more from the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Nevertheless, we believe that the overall balance of United Nations activities remains positive. We have managed to avoid a recurrence of the threat of a global nuclear conflict. We have prevented or resolved dozens of armed conflicts. And we have prevented weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of terrorists.

We believe that strengthening the regimes on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is now coming to the forefront of multilateral efforts. The Russian Federation was one of the sponsors of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which aims at combating black markets for weapons of mass destruction. We call upon all States to implement its provisions rigorously. We also expect that the Council will extend the mandate of the resolution this month.

The Russian Federation also initiated, and was the first to sign, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The time has come to bring it into force and to have it fully implemented everywhere.

The world has recently encountered complicated issues in safeguarding the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe that preserving the integrity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and promoting its universalization are crucial tasks in the cause of ensuring international peace and security. The main role in that regard belongs to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), whose task, on the one hand, is to guarantee the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and, and on the other, to guarantee the legitimate interests of States in using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

We call for further efforts to find a solution to the issue of Iran's nuclear programme within the framework of the IAEA, in a calm and depoliticized atmosphere. We believe that the Agency is capable of clarifying the remaining issues.

Russia considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be one of the key elements in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. We are thinking primarily of those States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force. It is also important that the moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear

explosions should continue to be observed until that time.

We reaffirm our position that the next multilateral measure in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament should be the development of a fissile material cut-off treaty concerning the production of such material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We support reactivating the Ad Hoc Committee on a cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and with a mandate to negotiate.

Russia expresses its wholehearted support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions as one of the key elements in reducing the geographical area of nuclear weapons deployment. Russian nuclear weapons are located only within the borders of our national territory. In accordance with our national and international obligations, we have provided security assurances to NPT States parties participating in nuclear-weapon-free zones. We do not object to re-establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate under an agenda item entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

We are committed to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Russia fully complies with its commitments under article VI of the NPT, as well as under its treaties with the United States and unilateral initiatives on nuclear disarmament. Since 1991 the aggregate number of stockpiled nuclear weapons has been reduced by one fifth, and non-strategic nuclear weapons by one fourth. Those reductions — and this is indeed a labour-intensive, technically complex and very costly undertaking — are well underway and are running smoothly and uninterruptedly.

The Russian Federation is committed to the principle of the irreversibility of reductions in nuclear weapons. As President Putin has stated, we are prepared to take new constructive steps in that area.

With regard to the process of strengthening confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, Russia made every effort to promote the swift entry into force of the renewed Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), including the ratification, in summer 2004, of the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty. Now it is our partners' turn. We have no intention of continuing to pretend that the CFE Treaty agreed in 1990 — when there was a confrontation between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO — is functioning normally and that we are satisfied with it. NATO countries must fulfil their obligations assumed at Istanbul in 1999 to undertake efforts to complete the national ratification procedures so that the Agreement on Adaptation can be implemented as soon as possible. It is clear that, if this situation does not change, the participants in the third CFE Treaty Review Conference, to be held in May this year, will have to decide in principle on the future of this cornerstone of European security.

Russia supports the leadership of the United Nations in resolving the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We are prepared to work out an international arms trade agreement under the aegis of the United Nations. Within the framework of the Small Arms Review Conference to be held this summer, we will provide information about specific actions that we have undertaken to implement the Programme.

Russia supports the functioning of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We consider that instrument to be an important confidence-building measure, and we submit data for it on a regular basis. We support the inclusion in the Register of a very sensitive kind of weapon — man-portable air defence systems — as a subcategory.

At the current session of the Disarmament Commission, we are prepared to consider issues related to the improvement of the United Nations disarmament machinery. We wish to point out, as a matter of principle, that this process should not infringe upon the legitimate interests of any member of the international community and that it should not become a purely bureaucratic process conducted by a small group of officials.

We do not believe that it is necessary to dismantle the existing multilateral disarmament triad of the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. The key issue here is to optimize and enhance the practical results of their

activities. At the same time, we believe that the Disarmament Commission should serve as an integrator of concrete ideas and concepts aimed at identifying problems that should be addressed through international agreements.

Ms. Notutela (South Africa): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at its 2006 substantive session. My delegation would also like to welcome Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka as the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

South Africa is gravely concerned at the general lack of meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament and the apparent paralysis in one of the main parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery: the Conference on Disarmament. The failure of the Seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament are an indictment that we have not risen to the challenge posed by nuclear weapons.

These impediments to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are manifestations of a serious lack of political will to implement previously agreed nuclear disarmament commitments and undertakings. They also depict our lack of courage to negotiate on certain core issues that would advance nuclear disarmament. South Africa believes that this state of affairs leaves us in a precarious situation of questionable prospects for nuclear disarmament. Rather than dispelling that view, the inability of the recent General Assembly High-level Plenary Meeting to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear non-proliferation entrenched it.

Despite that disappointing situation, South Africa continues to believe that progress on both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is required in order to attain the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. Although that is not a new concept, South Africa strongly cautions against the tendency to place primary emphasis on one or the other of those aspects. If that tendency continues unabated, the pivotal role of the NPT as the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation would be undermined.

Given these difficult times — which have been compounded by the Disarmament Commission's failure for the past two years to agree on an agenda — it is imperative that the Commission strive at its present session to continue as a deliberative body on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. However, every effort should be made to retain its relevance through focused debates on the agenda items. South Africa is hopeful that our deliberations will identify recommendations aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and finding achievable means to build confidence among States in the field of conventional weapons.

Nuclear disarmament is considered by all States to be one of the most important of the disarmament issues facing the international community. Moreover, nuclear disarmament is a concern of the entire international community. A source of concern for South Africa is the continuing refusal to recognize that that is indeed the case. The long and often frustrating negotiations to formulate an agenda item under the nuclear disarmament cluster are indicative of the lack of commitment to achieve progress in that field.

It is my delegation's firm belief that our deliberations at this session of the Disarmament Commission should build upon, but in no way diminish, the undertakings given and the agreements reached at the NPT Review Conferences. In that connection, South Africa strongly believes that all aspects of the NPT should be strictly implemented and enforced. Each article of the NPT remains binding on all States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and it is imperative that all States parties be held fully accountable as regards strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty. The Commission's deliberations on recommendations aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should support the processes in the context of the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT review mechanisms. The Commission should therefore consider further tangible ways and means to positively address the core elements required to facilitate action and results in moving our disarmament agenda forward.

Although nuclear weapons continue to constitute a serious threat to the survival of mankind, the build-up of conventional weapons — in particular small arms and light weapons — beyond a level that can be considered legitimate for the purposes of self-defence creates an unstable environment, in particular in areas where regional instability leads to regional conflicts. The rebuilding and prosperity of society gained

through various peace and democratization initiatives are curtailed by the accompanying proliferation of these weapons.

The excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons has a negative impact on confidence among States, especially neighbouring States. The critical factor for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons is the need for transparency. Transparency is a key to the early detection of destabilizing accumulations of weapons. The Disarmament Commission's deliberations on this topic should, however, supplement and draw upon work already done in its previous sessions and by the Conference on Disarmament and United Nations study groups, as well as the experiences of States in that regard.

We could also draw upon some of the pertinent regional experiences and outcomes of workshops and seminars held in the context of strengthening transparency measures in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Another measure that will assist Member States in the field of transparency is the full implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. As emphasized during the course of the negotiations on that instrument, South Africa believes that the United Nations should play an important role in the smooth operation of the instrument, including by facilitating cooperation and assistance in the field of marking and record-keeping. The basic premise behind the successful operation of the instrument is the concept of cooperation between and among States so as to trace and shut down illicit arms trading individuals and networks. As such, the sovereign right of States to trade in small arms and light weapons among one another should not be viewed as being under threat, but the instrument should be seen as contributing to our collective resolve to eradicate the illicit small arms and light weapons trade. Its value as a truly multilateral instrument will be measured against our willingness to share among ourselves the information that is required for its effectiveness.

Another practical measure to promote confidence among States in the field of conventional weapons that South Africa has actively pursued and implemented is the destruction of surplus and obsolete weapons no longer in use by Government forces. The destruction of surplus, confiscated or collected weapons, together with an appropriate reporting system on that process, will most certainly promote confidence among States in support of regional stability. It would significantly limit the illicit trade in such weapons as they may become targets of theft and diversion into the illicit trade.

With regard to the consideration of the item on improving the working methods of the Commission, my delegation supports idea that the discussion can continue based on the Chairman's working paper, as contained in the 2003 report of the Disarmament Commission. South Africa also believes that any efforts to improve the working methods of the Commission should also take into account the larger United Nations reform processes.

Finally, it is time that we find innovative ways of dealing with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as the prevalent paralysis in the United Nations disarmament machinery, in order to complement the achievements made on small arms and light weapons and anti-personnel mines. South Africa remains committed to working in the Commission and in all other disarmament and non-proliferation forums so as to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to limit the numbers of conventional weapons to the minimum required for self-defence. My delegation will express specific views and positions on the two agenda items under consideration at this session during the deliberations of the two working groups.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): Mr. Chairman, please allow me to convey my congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission and to express confidence that, under your able stewardship, substantive progress will be made in addressing important issues on the agenda of the Commission.

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka on his appointment to the high office of Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and to express my appreciation for his introductory remarks made at the opening meeting here.

We all know that today the global security system is facing a serious crisis. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to set up a balanced and comprehensive mechanism that would facilitate the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Even more disturbing is the lack of clear recommendations on non-proliferation and disarmament in the outcome document of the summit.

Threats and challenges, particularly the proliferation of nuclear arms and the rise of international terrorism, have become a matter of grave concern for the international community. The danger of the acquisition of nuclear weapons or their components by terrorists has grown tremendously and has become an imminent threat. The adoption of, and general support for, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime and at preventing non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, is a strong signal in favour of an effective multilateral approach in this sphere.

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament are mutually complementary processes. Kazakhstan continues to believe that it is essential to ensure a fair balance between the mutual obligations of both nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States in order to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan has always pursued a principled policy of demilitarization and nuclear disarmament. We call for the universalization of international instruments in that area, including those elaborated by the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Last year we marked the tenth anniversary of the removal from the territory of Kazakhstan of all nuclear devices left over from the former Soviet Union. Our country has set a commendable example by voluntarily eliminating its nuclear arsenal, acceding to the NPT as a non-nuclear State, and shutting down the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground. Kazakhstan will continue to call upon all nuclear-weapon States to take further considerable steps on their way to nuclear disarmament.

Kazakhstan reaffirms its continued and strong commitment to the NPT, which remains the cornerstone of global efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime based on three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Kazakhstan also reaffirms its principled position regarding a total ban on all nuclear testing. We believe that it is necessary to speed up the ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Kazakhstan recognizes the special role of the International Atomic Energy Agency. All of the country's nuclear activity is being carried out in accordance with its standards and under its control. In 2002, Kazakhstan became a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which contributes significantly to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We are convinced that the establishment of new, internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world is compatible with the goal of ensuring the integrity and sustainability of the international non-proliferation regime and would contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in different regions, and hence throughout the world. Kazakhstan is actively involved in the negotiations on a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, which would become an important contribution by Central Asian States to the declared objectives.

Kazakhstan fully supports the decision of the Disarmament Commission to include in its agenda an item on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons and believes that the destabilizing accumulation and proliferation of weapons continues to be a key factor affecting security and stability in the world. Criminal and terrorist groups and radical religious movements are actively engaged in illicit arms trafficking. Confidence-building measures constitute a very important and effective element in strengthening regional and global security. We should elaborate a broad spectrum of practical components that are integral parts of confidence-building measures, including establishing direct and open communications, arms control, verification, monitoring programmes and so on.

Our country is actively working on these issues within the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which we view as an important and useful forum for the exchange of views on security problems in the Asian region. It is encouraging to note that the CICA

member States have already made most of the practical efforts required to institutionalize the Conference. Important documents, including the Declaration on Principles, the catalogue of CICA confidence-building measures and the CICA rules of procedure, have already been adopted. The next steps within CICA will involve further joint efforts to implement confidence-building measures mentioned in the catalogue of CICA confidence-building measures, as well to adopt a common approach to new threats and challenges to security in Asia.

The second CICA summit is to take place in Almaty this summer. Plans for the summit include the adoption of the final political document and the signing of the CICA secretariat statute. On the eve of the summit, the CICA secretariat will be inaugurated.

My delegation also supports the consideration of measures to improve the effectiveness of the methods of work of the Commission. An agreed recommendation in that area could help us to ensure the success of future sessions.

Let me express once again our hope that during its current session the Commission will be able to formulate meaningful recommendations for the General Assembly on the whole range of issues under consideration. My delegation stands ready to work together with our colleagues to achieve our common goals.

The Chairman: Before adjourning the meeting, I shall say a few words about our future work. As representatives are aware, the Commission has not yet been able to elect a chairperson for Working Group I. I am continuing, with the assistance of Bureau members, to actively consult all regional groups on the candidature for that post. Given the absence of a chairperson for Working Group I, we in the Bureau have decided to offer the Commission the following programme of work, which reflects a few necessary changes, for the remainder of the week.

The last plenary meeting devoted to the general exchange of views will be held this afternoon. There are five or six further speakers on the list, so the meeting should end at about 4.30 p.m. There will be no meeting tomorrow morning, Wednesday 12 April. The first meeting of Working Group II will be held tomorrow afternoon in this Conference Room from 3 to 6 p.m.

On Thursday, 13 April, the Commission will meet in plenary meeting from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to discuss measures to improve the working methods of the Disarmament Commission. From 3 to 6 p.m., Working Group II will meet for the second time. That will take us to the end of this week's work, because Friday is not a working day. The Commission will resume its work on Monday of next week. We in the Bureau intend to continue our consultations, and hopefully by then we will have a chairperson for Working Group I.

I would like to say a few words about documentation to be submitted for consideration, particularly that relating to the issue of measures to improve working methods, which we will start to discuss on Thursday. Since I understand that several delegations intend to submit documents on that subject, I would urge them to do so as soon as possible. In determining what kind of papers they want to submit, they should keep in mind that working papers are usually issued in all languages and that the Secretariat will require 48 hours to translate them. On the other hand, what we call conference room papers are not translated and are issued in the language of submission only. I once again draw the attention of members to the time factor. Representatives should bear that in mind in deciding whether they want to submit working papers or conference room papers.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.